

Auras by roady

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Summary:

Will Byers knew the Upside Down and the Mind Flayer had taken things from him, but he was more concerned by what he'd been given.

Auras

Author's Note:

I wanted to write something that featured Will With Powers, and this turned out twice as long as I initially planned. I hope you guys like it! No content warnings that I can think of, except perhaps the slightest reference to PTSD and sensory issues.

It started off small. Around six weeks after the Mind Flayer had been exorcised from Will Byers and his mind had finally cleared, he started seeing them. Little flickers of light. He hesitantly mentioned them to Dr. Owens at a checkup.

“Interesting,” he’d said, leaning forward in his chair. He pulled out a pen light and shined it in Will’s eyes, one after the other. “Do you get headaches, Will?”

“Um, sometimes,” Will said softly, suddenly wanting desperately for this interaction to end. Dr. Owens made a thoughtful sound.

“Could be migraines,” Dr. Owens offered. “Or a side effect of your medication. We’ll keep an eye on it.” His mother Joyce smiled at Will reassuringly and he nodded.

At home, the visions continued.

Six months passed. Summer came. Will’s mother and Jim Hopper began spending more time together.

“Are you and Hopper dating, mom?” Will asked one evening while washing up after dinner. Joyce faltered, her hands wrist deep in dishwater.

“We’re... Talking.”

“Oh,” Will said with some finality, as though he understood. After a few moments, he added, “what does that mean?”

“It’s something adults do sometimes when they like each other, but

it's complicated."

"What's complicated about it?" Will asked. Joyce looked thoughtful.

"It's complicated because we both have people in our lives who are really important to us and we want to make sure it's the right choice for us before we take things much further."

"You mean people like Jane?"

"Sure. Jane is very important to Hopper. Just like you and your brother are so important to me."

Will nodded, looking back down at the dish he was drying.

Will didn't mind Jane. Sometimes he felt like he knew her very well, even though they hadn't spoken much. Other times she seemed like an alien from another planet.

One night, she and Hopper joined the Byers for dinner. Things were going well, Will was feeling hopeful. He wanted so badly to see his mom happy. He could feel it every time she glanced his way at dinner and he tried to make sure he was smiling.

When they were finished eating, Will jumped to his feet. "I'll help clear the table," he offered. He grabbed his plate and Jonathan's and reached for a glass but instead sent it tumbling over the edge. He winced, bracing himself for the sound of breaking glass that never came.

Instead, he watched as the glass hovered in air, slowly levitating back up and onto the table. He glanced around at everyone's uneasy expressions, Hopper's flushed face.

"Um, thanks, Jane," he said quickly, trying to defuse the tension. She nodded. Joyce reached out and squeezed Jane's hand.

Dinners with Hopper and Jane quickly became a weekly occurrence. All summer long, Will found himself seeing her more and more often as Hopper slowly grew more comfortable with her experiencing life beyond the cabin. The Byers's home was a safe place from Jane's perspective—even if some dark things had happened there.

It wasn't until the fall of that same year that the visions began to impact the way the way Will saw the world.

In recent weeks the lights he saw had begun to take on different hues. The entire visible light spectrum, which he had learned about in last year's biology course, appeared before him at different moments. At first it seemed wholly randomized, but the more he observed the more he noted patterns in the colors.

As he navigated his freshman year of high school, Will studied his private visions like a secret language. Everything seemed meaningless and overwhelming at first. Walking the halls of the school was like being bombarded with light and sound and feeling in a way that frequently made Will want to shrink to the floor and cover his head with his hands.

When the winter holidays rolled around, he made the decision to speak to the only person he knew who might have some answers: Jane. Sitting on his bed flipping through magazines and cutting out people and clothes and pages they liked, Will had worked up the courage to share his secret.

"Jane..." he began, uncertain. She made a soft sound to let him know she was listening, but didn't raise her head from where she was carefully slicing up an image of a leather jacket.

"Um, are you ever able to to hear people's thoughts?"

She glanced up at him. "Not hear. Sometimes I can feel. See memories." Will nodded, increasingly uneasy. Jane tipped her head to the side. "Why?"

"Sometimes... Lately, I mean, uh. I can see things? Things that are like feelings, but come to life." Jane watched Will carefully, but said nothing. The silence urged him to go on. "Like when someone is sad, sometimes, I can see a light around them. A light that tells me... They're sad," he finished, lamely.

Jane set her magazine down. "When I see, I can see what happened before. What happens now. But not what happens next. Everyone is... Different." She hesitated. "My sister. She can make other people see.

Not just real things. My mother was different, too.”

“Do you think I’m like you?” Will asked. He felt strange, somewhat frightened.

“Don’t know,” Jane admitted.

“Do you think it changed me?”

Jane’s face fell. “Don’t know,” she repeated, her voice softer and sadder. “When you see, does it scare you? Does it hurt?”

“Sometimes it feels like my head’s going to explode, but... It doesn’t hurt,” Will clarified.

“Sometimes you can control it. But I had to learn.” Jane glanced around the room, then put her hands out, palms up to Will. She nodded softly to him, looking from his eyes to her hands. He reached out and clasped them in his own.

“Close your eyes,” Jane said softly. “Think about it. When you see.” Will tried to imagine the hallway at school, the auras filling his line of sight. “Now see it farther away. Smaller. Like a TV. Make it smaller and smaller. Close it up in your hand, like a fist.” She released his right hand and slowly drew her fingers to her palm beneath his own.

Will mimicked the motion, trying to imagine the TV getting smaller, grasping it in a tight fist. They sat in silence for a few seconds before Will opened his eyes.

“I think I’ll need to practice,” he said quietly. Jane nodded. “Thank you,” Will added with a small smile. Jane smiled as well.

From then on, it did get a little easier. Will practiced the method that Jane had taught him, and by the time summer rolled around, being around other people had stopped feeling like being trapped on an out of control roller coaster.

That summer Will tried his best to be a carefree kid. He listened to records with Jonathan and played campaigns with the party and saw movies in the heat of the afternoon, eating popcorn by the bucket

full. But he kept finding himself anxiously counting down the days until his return to school, until his sophomore year, his junior, his senior—until his life was no longer punctuated by summer breaks and two weeks off at Christmas.

There was something else on Will's mind that summer, as well. He'd pushed it aside over and over in the past couple years, but it was more persistent than ever. It was there when he watched the older boys play basketball in the park or when Han Solo flashed his perfect smile. But mostly it was there when he thought about Mike.

Will thought about Mike a lot. He thought about how the summer sun made every freckle on his face stand out in perfect contrast to his pale skin. He thought about how his hair curled when it drip-dried after swimming. Will thought a lot about the way his breath would sometimes catch in his chest when Mike caught his eye and smiled.

Will didn't need anyone to tell him—not his father or the bullies at school or even Jonathan, who did everything he could to make it clear that he should feel free to be himself completely. Will knew he liked boys. And that was... Fine. Fine enough.

But what he couldn't accept was that he liked Mike. More than liked, even. That he loved him. That he loved him in a way that felt different, so different, from every other love in his life. This was a feeling he found absolutely terrifying.

He kept it to himself, like so many things. As time wore on, he found keeping secrets was quite easy. And whenever it did start to feel like too much, he found outlets to express himself. He wrote out playlists of songs he imagined would do the following: tell Mike how he felt and console him when Mike didn't feel the same way. Sometimes, when he was feeling particularly indulgent, he even wrote out soundtracks for their imaginary courtship.

All the while, Will was thankful to have Mike in his life—in whatever form that relationship happened to take. Because regardless of whether Mike would ever want to kiss or hold him, he trusted that Mike would always be kind to him. Mike seemed to have an inexhaustible capacity to look after him, but never in a way that made him feel weak or childish, just cared for. Loved, even.

But in recent months things had started to change. He felt something; something more when Mike looked at him from time to time. Like when he teased him, gently, about their dramatic height difference. Or how he often got Will's attention not by calling his name but by touching him, on the shoulder or the elbow or once, when stepping into a movie theater, on his hip.

Or maybe it was the way he leaned closer to Will when he spoke. How they carried on little private side conversations, even when the rest of the party was in attendance, because there was always something, some small thing that Mike had to tell him. He'd tip his head closer to Will's ear and he could feel the warmth of Mike's breath on his neck and it was everything he could do to actually listen to the words Mike was speaking and not just count the freckles on the ridge of his cheekbone.

And sometimes there was this flicker, this aura. It felt like heat, but harsher than the sun, prickly on his skin. He'd felt it once while dressing out in the locker room for P.E. and looked up to see Mike, eyes raking across his bare back. Their gaze met and Will felt a little thrill, followed by a mix of embarrassment and shyness. Mike had mumbled an apology. Will had gone home and spent the better part of an hour looking at himself in the mirror, shirtless, trying to ascertain some difference in himself.

Same old scrawny Zombie Boy. But it wasn't the last time he caught Mike looking at him with something that felt like more than friendly affection.

One weekend in the winter of his junior year of high school, Will's mother and Hopper decided to go on a trip to Chicago together. Joyce had finally weakened her vice grip on Will, her fear for his safety returned to more moderate levels after several years of slow but steady decline. But Will was still a little shocked when he asked her if Mike could stay over and she said yes—provided Will checked in regularly.

He and Mike had spent the evening of Joyce and Hopper's departure eating entirely too much pizza and trying their damndest to not get greasy fingerprints all over their comic books. He'd stolen more than a dozen glances at Mike while they lounged on the sofa in the living

room. Every time Mike caught him looking he'd flash him a little smile that made Will feel like he was going to melt.

When they finally settled in to sleep, Mike bundled in his too small sleeping bag on the floor, Will found that he was exhausted but unable to wind down. He lie still and silent for what felt like an eternity.

"Mike, you awake?" Will asked in a voice just above a whisper. Will very well knew that he was—knew many things instinctively that he hadn't before. Unlike Jane, who made no effort to hide her abilities, Will was cautious and continued to ask questions to which he already knew the answers.

"Yeah," came Mike's soft reply from below. Glancing down, Will noted that the auras around Mike burned brightly enough that he could make out his face in the dark.

"Come up here?" Will heard himself ask, suddenly, remarkably unafraid. Mike blinked, opened his mouth as if to say something, but quickly closed it. He got to his feet, and when Will felt the mattress dip as he knelt on the edge, he shivered involuntarily.

Mike settled next to him on the small bed, face to face. Will shifted slightly backward, closer to the wall, but never took his eyes away from Mike's face.

"Hi," Mike whispered, the corner of his mouth quirking upward.

"Hey," Will replied with a small smile.

Will was never able to hear thoughts. Not in the linear sort of way that he heard his own, like a voiceover or a narration. But sometimes the auras were more or less clear. He'd never really been able to assign a coherent color or shape or pattern to this or that feeling, but the more time he spent with someone, the easier it was to read them.

Will read his mother with relative ease, even though her emotions were more complex than most, swirling and blending together feelings that seemed alien to one another—joy and sadness, fear and love. Mike took more time to understand. More evenings of quiet

study while they sat together, reading comic books or drawing and writing.

The first time he really felt he'd gotten a grasp on it was when they'd rented a copy of *The Neverending Story* and watched it in Mike's basement. During the scene where Atreyu's horse Artax drowned in the swamp, Mike cried—something Will had seen him do several times before. But this time it was different, because he could feel it as well.

Will felt the smallest pang of guilt at reading Mike's emotions. It did feel, on occasion, like an invasion of privacy. Other times it was unavoidable. Mike's feelings could be so strong they flooded Will's senses. Once, during a fight with his parents, Mike had stormed over to the Byers's. As soon as Will opened the front door the sensation of Mike's rage was so strong he felt ill.

Now was no exception. There were a variety of feelings swirling around in Mike's vicinity but the strongest of all of them was want. Will could feel it seeping into him, answering and mirroring his own feelings. He'd spent many a lonely evening when he was younger pining after Mike, wondering if he ever thought of him in the same way. Knowing it—feeling it—was still overwhelming.

Will slid forward, closing the small distance between them, and placed his head against Mike's chest and wrapped one arm around his side. Mike hesitated for a fleeting moment before putting his arms around Will's shoulders and resting his chin on the top of his head.

"You okay?" Mike asked, uncertain.

"Yeah, I just wanted to, um... Is this okay?"

"Yeah, no, this is... This is nice," Mike whispered with a smile in his voice. Will sighed happily, snuggling closer.

Will had expected his heart to race or his pulse to quicken or his body to react in some way when wrapped up in Mike's arms, something he'd imagined many times before, but he'd never expected to find peace. Lying there, feeling Mike's chest rise and fall with each breath, he felt right. Righter than he'd ever felt, more at home in his

body than he thought possible.

Mike was gently rubbing his back with one hand, and he could feel the motion grow slower and slower until it stopped entirely. Mike's breathing was soft and low and Will realized he'd fallen asleep. When he began to snore lightly, Will couldn't fight the smile that came to his lips—it was the last thought he had before drifting off himself.

In the morning, Will's consciousness returned slowly, in a series of fleeting sights and sounds and sensations. He and Mike had shifted positions in the night; Mike slept like a stone despite Will's restlessness. Will found himself on his side, curled into the fetal position, with Mike's arms still around him, his front pressed against Will's back.

Will longed to stay like this forever, but he couldn't ignore the press of his pajama waistband against his very full bladder. He squirmed out of Mike's embrace, ignoring his soft noise of protest.

After washing his face and brushing his teeth, Will wandered into the kitchen, retrieving a bag of bagels, a container of schmear, and a butter knife. He returned to find Mike sprawled out on the small bed, one leg hanging off the edge. He poked the base of Mike's foot with his toe and he jumped a little.

"Breakfast?" Will offered. Mike blinked several times, yawned, and rolled away towards the wall.

"Too early," Mike murmured. Will snorted and sat down next to him, biting into a bagel. After a few minutes of eating quietly, Mike rolled onto his back and looked up at Will with a shy smile.

They spent the day peacefully enjoying each other's company. Things somehow managed to feel completely the same between them, with the small exception of taking every opportunity to touch or embrace.

There was nothing overtly romantic about it, Will assured himself, to keep his imagination from running rampant. It was just arms around shoulders and hand holding and fingers in soft, chestnut brown hair. When Mike's mom called to check in he was slightly less sullen and sarcastic than normal, and it probably had nothing to do with Will

hugging him from behind.

That night they'd gone to the arcade to meet up with Max, Lucas, and Dustin, and mashed buttons until closing time, when they drove over to the all night diner for junk food with a side of obnoxious conversations and raucous laughter. When Will minced about getting a milkshake, counting the change in his pocket, Mike told him not to worry about it.

"Mike, come on," Will protested gently.

"What? We'll share it," Mike said with a small smile.

"Kay," Will said softly, the tops of his ears turning red. Mike put an arm around his shoulders and gave him a little squeeze. Dustin caught Will's eye across the table and raised an eyebrow before giving him a conspiratorial wink. Will sank lower in his seat and giggled nervously.

After heated discussions of upcoming movies to see had died down and Lucas had tried, and failed, to keep Dustin from eating his remaining french fries by licking each one, Mike and Will decided to call it a night. As Mike drove them home, Will chewed his lip and stared out the window as the familiar scenery passed by.

"I was thinking," Mike began in a soft voice. "Maybe tonight, I won't get out my sleeping bag?"

Will swallowed nervously. "Yeah, that sounds... Yeah." He laughed in spite of himself and Mike did too.

After a second night of sleeping in Mike's arms, Will was convinced he'd happily share a bed with him for the rest of his life. He was lying in bed the following morning, half-awake and dreaming about such a version of his life: a little apartment near a park and cafes and a mop-haired dog that greeted him when he came home and a bed that always smelled like fresh laundry and Mike Mike Mike.

Will was awakened by Mike stirring softly, nuzzling Will's neck playfully with his nose until he giggled and squirmed. After a moment of stillness, Will felt the ghost of Mike's lips press against the

nape of his neck. He froze, holding his breath, suddenly aware of the auras curling around him, almost tactile. He slowly rolled over on to his back, staring up at Mike, willing him to inch forward into what remained of the space between them.

Just as Mike began to lean down, mercilessly slowly, the sound of the front door opening and closing made them both jump.

“Will, honey, we’re back!” Joyce called from the front room. He could hear Hopper’s heavy footsteps as well. Will scrambled over Mike and out of the bed, hoping to pre-empt his mother entering his room.

He stepped into the living room, blinking sleep from his eyes. His mom smiled and scurried across the room to wrap him up in a hug. “You’re back early,” Will murmured into her shoulder. She laughed.

“Good to see you too!”

“Sorry, I just meant... Was it okay, did you have a good time?” Will asked, stifling a yawn.

“It was great, really, I just wanted to get back so I could talk to you about something.” Just then Will noticed his mother’s aura, a mixture of nervous energy and excitement. “Oh, hey, Mike, sweetie, I didn’t realize you were still here.”

Will turned to see Mike in the hallway, smiling sleepily and looking a bit shy. He tried to give Mike a reassuring glance, but his nerves still felt a bit jangled.

“Well, come over here,” Joyce urged, smiling and lifting one arm and beckoning Mike into the hug. Mike walked over and put one arm around Joyce and one arm around Will, giving them both a little squeeze.

“So,” Joyce began, her voice giving away just the slightest tremble. “While we were gone, Jim asked me something we’ve been talking about for a little while, and I said yes. And I wanted you to be the first one I told, because, I don’t want you to think that I made this decision without you in mind—and Jonathan, of course—but...” She

faltered.

“What is it, Mom?” Will asked, suddenly nervous as well.

“We’re gonna get married. This spring,” Hopper announced, a few feet away, setting down their suitcases.

Will’s mouth fell open slightly, looking from Hopper to his mother and back again.

“Really?”

“Yeah, really,” Joyce confirmed in a gentle voice, rubbing Will’s back.

“Congratulations,” Mike said softly.

“Thank you, Mike. Will, sweetie, you haven’t said anything yet... Are you—is this okay?”

“Oh, yes, I mean,” Will sniffed, suddenly feeling overwhelmed. “Yeah, Mom, it’s great, I’m really happy for you.” He buried his face in her shoulder and hugged her tightly. Mike rubbed his back.

“Oh, honey, are you crying?”

“Yeah,” Will said piteously. “S-sorry, I don’t know why. I’m happy, honestly.” He sniffed again, wiping his face roughly with the back of his hand.

“That’s okay, baby, really. I cried too,” Joyce said softly, holding Will’s face in her hands. Will laughed a little, but it came out like a sad little bubble of a sound.

“Hey, um, I think I’m gonna head out,” Mike interjected, backing toward the hallway.

“Oh, Mike, you don’t have to go, sweetheart.”

“No, no, it’s fine, I feel like you guys should have some time, just the three of you, you know?”

“Are you sure, Mike?” Will asked, sniffing.

“Yeah, don’t worry about it. I’ll call you later, okay?” Will nodded, although he desperately wanted Mike to stay. When they hugged goodbye on the front porch, it was everything Will could do to let go.

“I’ll see you soon, Will,” Mike said in a soft, reassuring whisper, directly into his ear.

In the end, that weekend was one of the last times Mike and Will had alone together for a while. Final exams rolled around, then Christmas and New Year’s. The Wheelers went off on a skiing trip to Sun Valley, leaving Will to wedding planning and SAT prep.

The wedding, slated for the first weekend of Hawkins High spring break, approached at a breakneck pace. Will took Mike and Jonathan with him shopping for suits, struggling to strike a balance between affordable and attractive. As Jonathan straightened his tie, a blue-green silk affair meant to compliment his mother’s dress, Will caught Mike admiring him, his expression warm and soft and inviting. He had to look away before he got completely lost.

And while it was stressful and anxiety inducing and involved the collective opinions of way too many people, the wedding was beautiful. Really, really beautiful. Will had never really understood when people talked about crying because you were happy, but several times since he’d woken up that morning, he’d had to excuse himself to go cry, just a little, in his bedroom.

As right as it felt, as much as he had longed for his mother to find happiness, Will knew that this marriage was the end of something, too. He didn’t find that he missed his father Lonnie much, not the person he was and certainly not who he’d become, but sometimes he missed the feeling. The ‘family unit’—whatever. It had felt real and right for many years when he was small.

And Will liked Hopper a lot, but he’d never be his father, and he’d certainly never be Jonathan’s. They’d always be brothers, he’d always have his mother. But the Byers... That party had disbanded, a long time ago. Only the castle remained.

There were a dozen people milling around the house, cutting up crudités and fixing up-dos and turning others away when they approached the house instead of going straight to the rows of folding chairs setup in the backyard. Will spotted Mike in the kitchen, showing Jane how to cut carrot sticks. Their eyes met for a moment and Mike inexplicably winked at him, which made him feel equal parts thrilled and uncomfortable.

“You should have just gotten the babies,” Jane assessed, mildly exasperated after awkwardly chopping several carrot sticks.

“The what?” Mike asked, a smile in his voice.

“Carrot babies. The small carrots,” Jane clarified with a small hint of annoyance.

“Baby carrots?” Will offered, taking one of the carrot sticks and popping it into his mouth. Mike made a sound of recognition before laughing softly.

“That’s what I said,” Jane insisted. Will smiled and pressed his shoulder against Mike’s side, prompting him to put an arm around Will and ruffle his hair, which he protested with a little shout.

“What are you guys up to in here?” Jonathan asked, slipping into the kitchen carrying a mini amplifier.

“Carrot babies,” Will said with a smile. Jonathan gave him a funny look and reached over to tousle his hair. “Hey! If one more person musses my hair, you’ll have to be the one to tell Mom why I ruined all her wedding photos.”

“My turn,” Jane piped up, dashing over and giving Will something closer to a pat on the head. Will stuck his tongue out at her good-naturedly and she smiled.

“The ceremony is going to start soon. I’m just getting a few more things setup outside, if you guys want to help,” Jonathan gestured towards the back door with a gentle nod of his head.

Will, Jane, and Mike filed outside behind Jonathan and helped him setup a makeshift deejay’s booth. The backyard was decorated with

crepe paper and flowers and Hopper had even built a chuppah as a surprise for Joyce. As Will was admiring everything, Mike slipped up behind him and put an arm around his shoulder.

“Hey,” he said softly. Will sighed and leaned into the embrace.

“Hi,” Will whispered, taking in Mike in his suit, which looked nice on him, but was already a little short around the ankles.

“Do you want to sit together?” Mike asked, giving him a gentle squeeze. Will nodded. Jonathan picked up the microphone and announced that the ceremony was beginning in 5 minutes and asked everyone to please take their seats.

Will thought he had sufficiently emotionally prepared himself for the experience of the wedding: watching his mother walk down the aisle, watching Hopper take her hand. But it still felt like too much, watching it happen. Like his heart was going to burst.

As the reception went into full swing, the auras around him felt so strong Will thought he might pass out. It was beautiful, of course, like a sunrise or the ocean or a mountain rising up out of the earth—but it was also overwhelming. His expression faltered and he glanced at Mike, who gave his hand a gentle squeeze.

“You ok?” Mike mouthed silently. Will shook his head. “Want to take a break for a minute?” he whispered. Will nodded.

Will glanced around and caught his brother’s eye, giving a little wave. Jonathan nodded, and Mike and Will turned and walked away from the festivities, disappearing into the woods just beyond the house.

They walked for a few minutes, until the music and the hum of people talking faded away into the soft sounds of the forest. Will felt relief as soon as they were a hundred feet or so away, but he also didn’t mind a walk in the woods, alone with Mike.

Eventually they came to a stop at the base of a large tree. They paused, leaning their backs against it. Mike took Will’s hand in his own, tracing patterns on his skin with the tip of his thumb.

“They looked really happy, huh?” Mike asked wistfully, staring out into the forest.

“Yeah,” Will said softly, feeling his eyes pricking with tears once more. He looked up at Mike, his head leaning back against the bark of the tree, his long pale neck exposed. He was smiling, but he also looked a little sad.

“Hey, Mike?” Will said in a voice so quiet he wasn’t sure he’d heard until he responded.

“Yeah?” The spring day was unseasonably warm; Mike’s face was flushed and he smelled faintly of sweat, along with something woody—cologne? Will chewed on his lip for a moment, uncertain.

“Kiss me?” he asked, after a few seconds had passed.

Will thought Mike might balk or hesitate or feign ignorance at first, but he surged forward as if he’d been waiting for the request all day. The kiss was soft and warm and Will made a gentle sound of surprise into Mike’s mouth.

They broke apart for a second and the aura emanating from Mike made Will shiver. Before he could stop himself he reached up and pulled Mike down into another kiss, this time more heated. He felt Mike smile, ending the kiss for a split second to look into each other’s eyes.

Will stood up on the tips of his toes to reach Mike’s face, his fingers sliding into the hair at the nape of his neck, slightly damp with sweat. He resisted the very strong urge to muss Mike’s perfectly quaffed hair; as if their pink cheeks and red lips wouldn’t be evidence enough of just what they’d been up to when they wandered off.

As they deepened the kiss, Will gripped Mike’s neck with one hand and curled his fingers around the lapel of Mike’s coat with his other. Mike moaned, just a little, into his mouth and Will thought he might die then and there.

They kissed for several more minutes before Will leaned back to catch his breath. Mike’s expression was something akin to dazed

adoration. He grinned stupidly and Will did the same.

“How’d you know I wanted to kiss you?” Mike asked, rubbing his thumb across Will’s knuckles. “Am I that obvious?”

Will smiled. “I could just sense it.”